



U.S. Department of State

## AMERICAN EMBASSY QUITO - ECUADOR

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008

### American Citizen Newsletter

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### Welcome from Consul Elizabeth Jordan

Dear Resident Americans,

I hope you are off to a great start in 2008! We hope you enjoyed and found informative our first American Citizen E-Newsletter earlier this year. Thank you for your response to our call to register with the Embassy and those that volunteered to serve as wardens.

Since the last newsletter, many events and issues relevant to Americans residing in Ecuador transpired, including the devastating floods, Tungurahua eruption, and the temporary heightening of regional tensions. These events remind us of the importance

of crisis and disaster preparedness. In this issue, we've included relevant information and recommendations on this subject, as well as a new section from our Regional Security Office on local crime. The American Citizen Services sections in Quito and Guayaquil continue to stand ready to serve you, both for routine services and in times of need.

Best regards,

Elizabeth Jordan

Consul

## Consuls Coming (Again) to a Town Near You

After our successful visit to Macas in early February, the American Citizens Services section in Quito is planning another visit within Ecuador in order to meet with American Citizens and provide services. We are currently finalizing location and date, and will be in touch once the plans are confirmed. We look forward to serving you.

## Be Prepared

Whenever American citizens are facing a potentially volatile situation overseas, the State Department and Embassy Ecuador advises them to take the following precautions:

- **Make sure you are registered with the Embassy.**
  - Registering with the U.S. Embassy in Ecuador is critical in allowing us to serve you. We use the registration system to distribute warden messages, account for U.S. citizens in the case of an emergency, and keep an on-going count of U.S. citizens in Ecuador.

- To register and/or update your contact information, please visit:  
<https://travelregistration.state.gov>.
- We encourage all Americans to submit a valid, working email address so that we are able to directly send you our warden messages and other pertinent information.
- **Get your documents in order.**
  - Make sure your passport is valid.
  - If you have non-American immediate family members who would travel with you in an emergency, apply for appropriate visas or other travel documents now.
  - Gather all of your important documents, such as birth and marriage certificates, U.S. driver's licenses, insurance documents, etc., and put them in a convenient place that you can grab and go in case of emergency.
- **Get your finances in order.**
  - Put aside enough US dollars to cover emergency travel expenses and keep your credit cards in a handy place.
  - Identify which of your valuables you could carry with you in a carry-on bag and make arrangements for securing valuables that are too big to carry.
- **Develop a family plan.**
  - Identify a rendezvous point for family members to meet should communication services be interrupted.
  - Make arrangements for someone to take care of your pets if you had to leave unexpectedly.
  - Make arrangements with domestic staff for protecting your property in your absence.
  - Collect contact phone numbers and addresses of local staff, businesses, and friends you might need to contact from the United States.
- **Stock up on food, water, and gasoline.**
  - In the event of civil unrest and natural disasters, the most prudent course may be to just remain at home until the situation calms. Have enough food and water as well as first aid supplies on hand.
  - In the case of volcanic eruption and subsequent ash, we recommend having dust masks and work gloves.
- **Monitor latest information on our State Dept. % Embassy website.**

- [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) ; [www.ecuador.usembassy.gov](http://www.ecuador.usembassy.gov)
- For information on everything from entry requirements to medical facilities to disaster preparedness, please see the [Ecuador Consular Information Sheet](#).
- **Advise Embassy staff of any incidents that may threaten the safety of American citizens.**
  - Consular Section: Tel: (593) 256-2890; or e-mail [consularquito@state.gov](mailto:consularquito@state.gov)

## Regional Security Office Crime Quarterly

Crime is a serious problem in Ecuador, and all American citizen residents and visitors should be alert and cautious. This is the first in a regular newsletter column from the Regional Security Office (RSO) in Quito. Each newsletter, RSO will briefly describe recent crimes committed against American citizens in Ecuador and offer a tip to help avoid these crimes:

On January 6, 2008 at 12:15 PM, an American citizen's passport and digital camera were stolen from her bag while riding a bus. The subject (s) made a small incision in the victim's bag, which she was carrying over her shoulder, and stole the items without the victim noticing.

On January 8, 2008 at 10:00 AM, an American citizen's purse was stolen as she slept on a bus. Inside her purse were a U.S. passport, \$40 cash, and debit cards.

On January 8, 2008 7:00 PM, five subjects with pistols robbed a lone American citizen walking in the area of 12 de Octubre and Orellana. The subjects stole the victim's laptop, U.S. passport, and a check in the amount of \$3200.

On January 30, 2008 at 11:00 AM while an American citizen was exiting a bus at Plaza Grande Station (Old Town near Venezuela and Chile) an unknown subject pushed her to cause a distraction while another subject snatched the victim's bag containing credit cards and \$40 cash.

Security Tip: Always be aware of your belongings while using public transportation as criminals tend to frequent buses to steal purses, bags, and other personal items while victims sleep or are distracted. Be aware that laptop computer bags appear to be special targets; you may want to disguise such bags inside larger knapsacks or duffel-style bags.

It is important that all American citizens exercise caution and proper judgment in Ecuador. For additional safety recommendations, including tips for avoiding pickpockets, incidents while driving or using public transportation, etc., [click here](#).

## A Call For Your Input

We hope that through this newsletter, Americans can stay in better contact with the U.S. Embassy and the rest of the American community throughout Ecuador. In our effort to improve this newsletter and make it more useful to our American community in Ecuador, we are seeking your submissions of:

**Letters to the Editor:** In order to more adequately address the concerns that members of the American community have, we would like to start a “Letters to the Editor” section of the newsletter. All Americans who have questions or concerns that they think could also benefit the American community as a whole are encouraged to submit letters. We will try to print and respond to those letters that deal with issues affecting the entire American community.

**Other Articles:** If you have another topic that you believe would be of interest to the American community, feel free to submit your ideas to us. Articles should be between 150 to 300 words in length.

**Organizational Profiles:** We would like to make it a normal practice of highlighting charity and non-profit organizations through which Americans are working to assist Ecuador. We welcome organizations to submit a short (150-300 word) description of their group to the newsletter. If and when possible, in each future edition, we will highlight a different organization. This quarter's featured organization is Hope House, located in Morona Santiago province.

*Founded in 1999 by American Citizens Marco and Kacey Toctaquiza, Hope House was planned and designed to be a refuge for abandoned and displaced youth in the orient region of Ecuador. The goal of the Hope House Foundation is to provide a home where these youth have the opportunity to pursue a purpose driven life full of experience, education and stability. Hope House works to provide children with useful job training skills in order to better their future.*

*Hope House Foundation is interacting to create a family environment to youth who have no experience in a family setting or who have been wounded by their own families in severe ways. Hope House believes, "The seeds we sow today are the fruit of tomorrow".*

*For more information on Hope House contact Marco Toctaquiza  
[matb@macas.ecua.net.ec](mailto:matb@macas.ecua.net.ec)*

## Hours and Contact Information

The U.S. Embassy in Quito and Consulate in Guayaquil provide a full range of consular and passport services for American citizens. Please [click here](#) to access Quito's website for information on opening hours, contact information and general information on each our services. Please [click here](#) for Consulate Guayaquil's general information.

The U.S. Embassy in Quito and Consulate in Guayaquil is closed on Ecuadorian and American holidays. In the coming months, we will observe the following holidays:

## May

1<sup>st</sup>: Labor Day (Ecuadorian)

26<sup>th</sup>: Memorial Day

## July

4<sup>th</sup>: U.S. Independence Day

Contact information and opening hours

Quito: <http://ecuador.usembassy.gov/overview-and-contact-info.html>

Guayaquil: [http://guayaquil.usconsulate.gov/business\\_hours.html](http://guayaquil.usconsulate.gov/business_hours.html)

### **Quito American Citizen Services**

#### **Notarials:**

Monday - Thursday

1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

#### **All Other Services:**

Monday – Thursday

8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. & 1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

#### **Social Security:**

Tuesday – Thursday

1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Telephone Inquiries: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Tel: (593) 256-2890 EXT. 4523 (Only Social Security)

#### **Telephones:**

Tel: (593) 256-2890

Fax: (593) 256-1524

For calls concerning the arrest, injury, serious illness, or death of an American citizen after regular business hours (5:00 p.m. - 8:00 a.m.), please call: (593) 223-4126 or (593) 256-1749

#### **E-mail:**

General e-mail: [Consularquito@state.gov](mailto:Consularquito@state.gov)

### **Guayaquil American Citizen Services**

Passport and Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) services are available by appointment only Monday through Thursday, from 12 noon to 3:45 p.m. Notarials

are available by appointment only Friday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Please use the following link [http://guayaquil.usconsulate.gov/online\\_appointments.html](http://guayaquil.usconsulate.gov/online_appointments.html) to schedule an appointment online. Emergency requests for services can be directed to our email address and office number.

- Via Email: [acsquayaquil@state.gov](mailto:acsquayaquil@state.gov)

Please do not send your visa inquiries to this e-mail address.

- Via Telephone: Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at (04) 232-3570 ext. 227 or 228

Please do not use these extensions for visa inquiries.

- In person: Monday through Thursday from 12:00 noon to 3:45 p.m. at the U.S. Consulate in Guayaquil, 2nd Floor.

For American Citizen Emergencies outside normal business hours, please call (04) 232-1152.

For business other than American Citizens Services, Immigrant Visas, or Non-Immigrant Visas, call (04) 232-3570 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.